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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General cancels trip to Turkey in order to remain closer to developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* Bosnian Serb forces poise one kilometre from Zepa after sustained offensive against enclave; UNHCR strongly condemns treatment of civilians after capture of Srebrenica.

* Secretary-General announces establishment of Commission of Enquiry into failed coup attempt and massacres in Burundi.

* Security Council permits supply to Rwanda of explosives for established humanitarian demining programmes.

* MINUGUA reports human rights situation in Guatemala could be improved with political will of parties and commitment of Guatemalan society.

* United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to resume activities in region shortly.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to cancel a three-day visit to Turkey because of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a United Nations spokesman. He was scheduled to arrive in Turkey tomorrow, but made the decision in order to remain closer to the theatre of operations in the former Yugoslavia. He is now expected to attend a meeting of the Contact Group in London on Friday.

The Secretary-General this morning arrived in Addis-Abbaba on a one-day official visit to Ethiopia, and had a meeting with President Meles Zenawi. He had earlier concluded a visit to Burundi. Among his appointments there were meetings with President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo and Defence Minister Firmin Sinzoyiheba.

(more)

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Mr. Boutros-Ghali also paid an official visit to Angola over the weekend. He had separate meetings with the President of Angola, Jose Eduardo dos Santos and the President of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Jonas Savimbi. While en route from Luanda to Bujumbura yesterday he made a brief stop-over in Gbadolite, Zaire, to meet with President Mobuto Sese Seko.

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Bosnian Serb forces appeared to be poised one kilometre outside Zepa today, after launching a sustained offensive against the Bosnian enclave yesterday, according to a United Nations spokesman. Ukrainian peace-keepers continued to man four observation posts in the safe area. One of those posts was surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces, who made threats against the peace-keepers in the event of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air attacks. Three other posts were overrun by Bosnian Government forces yesterday.

Meanwhile, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata has condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the Bosnian Serb treatment of civilians in the fallen enclave of Srebrenica. Mrs. Ogata was today in Tuzla, where there are an estimated 23,000 displaced people from Srebrenica.

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The Secretary-General has announced the establishment of an International Commission of Enquiry into the failed coup attempt and the subsequent massacres in Burundi. He made that announcement in an address in Bujumbura this morning.

In an address to the authorities and public officials of Burundi yesterday, the Secretary-General said African development was being severely hampered by political instability. Ethnic confrontations and civil wars exacerbated the continent's poverty and underdevelopment and had created seven million refugees and two million displaced persons, he noted.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali stressed that Africans must take their destiny into their own hands. In that connection, he attached considerable importance to the role which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and regional institutions played in fostering security in Africa. He made a solemn appeal to all the people of Burundi for peace, tolerance and reconciliation.

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The Security Council today decided to permit the supply to Rwanda of explosives intended exclusively for use in established humanitarian demining programmes. It said the supplies could be delivered notwithstanding the arms embargo on Rwanda, subject to the authorization of the Committee set up to monitor that embargo. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 1,005 (1995).

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The Council noted that unexploded landmines were a substantial hazard to the population of Rwanda and an impediment to the country's rapid reconstruction. It said that safe and successful humanitarian demining operations would require the supply of an appropriate quantity of explosives for use in those operations.

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The United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) has said that the situation there can be improved with the political will of the parties and the commitment of society as a whole. In a report issued today, it outlined positive steps taken in response to serious and repeated violations of human rights and a persistent climate of impunity. However, it said that the progress achieved was inadequate considering the magnitude of the problems in Guatemala.

The report noted that there had been a sharp increase in the number of complaints received by MINUGUA. It attributed the increase to the fact that the Mission had reached full capacity and completed the deployment of its regional offices earlier in the year. Meanwhile, the Mission's mandate had been better publicized and the population had learned more about it. The mass media and specialized non-governmental organizations had played an important role in that regard.

The Mission said that both the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) had violated certain commitments under the 1994 Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights. It called on the Government to launch a nation-wide campaign for justice and tolerance, with the participation of all sectors of society. It said it would assist that effort through programmes aimed at institution-building and promoting a culture of respect for human rights.

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The United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan will shortly resume its activities in the region, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. The Head of the Mission, Mahmoud Mestiri, will arrive in Islamabad tomorrow. He will then proceed to Jalalabad and Kabul and other major Afghan centres.

Ambassador Mestiri will spend several weeks in Afghanistan, the spokesman noted. He will meet with various leaders across the political spectrum to assess developments since he left the region in April. He will also prepare a plan for carrying forward the peace process with the assistance of the United Nations.

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